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ALICE MEYNELL

TO A LOST MELODY

Thou art not dead, O sweet lost melody,
Sung beyond memory,
When golden to the winds this world of ours
Waved wild with boundless flowers;
Sung in some past when wildernesses were,—
Not dead, not dead, lost air!
Yet in the ages long where lurkest thou,
And what soul knows thee now?
Wert thou not given to sweeten every wind
From that o’erburdened mind
That bore thee through the young world, and that tongue
By which thou first wert sung?
Was not the holy choir the endless dome,
And nature all thy home?
Did not the warm gale clasp thee to his breast.
Lulling thy storms to rest?
And is the June air laden with thee now,
Passing the summer-bough?
And is the dawn-wind on a lonely sea
Balmy with thoughts of thee?
To rock on daybreak winds dost thou rejoice,
As first on his strong voice
Whose radiant morning soul did give thee birth,
Gave thee to heaven and earth?
Or did each bird win one dear note of thee
To pipe eternally?
Art thou the secret of the small field-flowers
Nodding thy time for hours,
—Blown by the happy winds from hill to hill,
And such a secret still?
Or wert thou rapt awhile to other spheres
To gladden tenderer ears?
Doth music’s soul contain thee, precious air,
Sleepest thou clasped there,
Until a time shall come for thee to start
Into some unborn heart?
Then wilt thou as the clouds of ages roll,
Thou migratory soul,

Amid a different, wilder, wilderness
—In crowds that throng and press,
Revive thy blessed cadences forgotten
In some soul new-begotten?
Oh, wilt thou ever tire of thy long rest
On nature’s silent breast?
And wilt thou leave thy rainbow showers, to bear
A part in human care?
—Forsake thy boundless silence to make choice
Of some pathetic voice?
—Forsake thy stars, thy suns, thy moons, thy skies
For man’s desiring sighs?